to the Association in the first instance, and undeterred by the risk of failure which many prophesied, or the fear of the odium which would attach to such failure, taken upon themselves its establishment. They have again, however, to say that it is not their wish to retain entirely in their own hands that which ought to belong to, and be supported by, the whole profession. So soon, therefore, as they shall see that its condition is such as would justify them in so doing, it is their desire to render it independent, and they hope shortly to be able to invite such of the exhibitors as may have shown the greatest interest therein, to co-operate with the committee of the exhibition."

The chairman, Mr. John D. Wyatt, read an address; after which Mr. W. Young read the report of a committee appointed to consider the subject of competition, which we have given in full.

The chairman then invited various gentlemen successively to address the meeting.

Mr. Godwin expressed his gratification that the exhibition, although opened at a time when London was empty, had been so well attended. He hoped it would be arranged earlier next year, and that three or four of the leading members of the profession would be associated with the committee to endeavour to render it worthy of the country. In the course of his remarks on the competition report, he drew attention to the propositions issued by the "Bristol Society of Architects."* With respect to No. 3, which suggests that the successful competitor should be required to find responsible contractors to complete the works for the sum specified in his own estimate, and in default thereof to relinquish all claim to compensation,—he said he thought this was, at all events, a questionable step. He considered, as he had on other occasions said, that an accurate estimate, founded on calculations, ought not to be expected from an architect unless he was paid for making it. If a competitor sent a design which manifestly to the eyes of judgment could not be carried out for the sum stipulated, it ought not to be admitted, but he thought it very doubtful if such a proposition as that he had referred to should be suggested to committees. The speaker referred briefly to the questions now engaging attention, and rejoiced that the report had not left untouched the importance of inculcating a high feeling on the part of the profession. Each should act as if he held in his hands the honour of the whole profession.

Mr. C. Fowler expressed his good wishes for the Association: their establishment of an Architectural Exhibition was most praiseworthy, and he regretted that his engagements had prevented him contributing: it was almost discreditable not to have an exhibition of architectural works. As to the competition matter, he knew something about it, from the part he had taken in framing the report of the Institute, and he feared the difficulties were too formidable to be overcome by the course pursued: still they should not relax in their endeavours. He would echo the remark of the last speaker as to the feelings with which the profession should be pursued: an architect should be a man of taste and a gentleman.

Mr. Hall, in the course of some observations, said, he must claim for the Manchester Architectural Society the merit of having originated the opposition to the proceedings of competition committees. As to the value of competitions, he thought he must object to them altogether, as doing more harm than good. He was glad to find that the exhibition had been visited by many workmen, as we should in our turn benefit by their improvement.

Mr. Billings introduced to the meeting a number of plates, further elucidating the system of geometric design. In the first series he had published, the designs had been constructed on three circles, placed at some distance from each other, and he had found that the nearer they were brought together the less was the variety obtainable. The moment the circles touched, however, the power returned, and the series of traceried panels which he then laid before them were constructed out of circles so placed.

Mr. Inman, Mr. C. H. Smith, and others, also made some observations.

* See BUILDER, page 473 *ante*.

MANAGEMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

REPORT of the committee appointed July 27, 1849, by the Architectural Association, to consider the subject of Architectural Competitions in connection with the published report of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the practicability of the suggestion that "Architects should meet together and lay down a set of regulations as to on what terms they ought to furnish designs in competition."

IN now, for the first time, producing their report to the Association, your committee feel that it may be required of them to explain why a period of more than twelve months has been allowed to elapse between their appointment and the production of the result of their labours.

They beg to state that the delay has arisen, not from any difficulty which they have experienced in recognising the practicability and utility of the proposal made by Mr. R. Brandon and others for the convening of a public meeting of the members of the architectural profession, but from the extreme difficulty of another task which your committee have imposed on themselves, without accomplishing which their labours would certainly seem incomplete. They allude to that of producing a code of regulations for future architectural competitions which might ensure the approval of even a majority of their own body.

With reference to the report of the Royal Institute of British Architects on Public Competitions for Architectural Designs, it may, after the long delay just explained, be necessary to remind the members of the Association that copies of that document were, some time prior to the appointment of the committee, most obligingly forwarded spontaneously to the committee of the Association by the secretary of the Institute, Mr. Scoles.

Your committee have several times perused, and very maturely considered, this report: they have themselves adopted it as the basis of the code of regulations which, in the absence of a better, they recommend the Association to submit to any public meeting of the profession it may invite, or in any other manner convene; and they strongly urge the Association to adopt that report as the basis of any proceedings it may publicly identify itself with. It will be found on perusal to contain a most lucid exposition of the evils of the system that so loudly calls for regulation at the hands of the profession, the only proper body to reform it. Yet your Committee have one objection to raise to this report of the Institute, even in its character of an exposure of the evils attendant on competitions; and that objection is, that owing to the period that has elapsed since its publication, in 1839, and the indifference with which the subject has been treated by the professional body, new evils have sprung into existence, so that the report, viewed even as a mere catalogue of evils, is, in 1850, incomplete.

Architectural competition, a system, if properly conducted, replete with advantage to art, to architects, and to the public, has degenerated from an ordeal or touchstone, however imperfect, of architectonic excellence, into a mere monetary speculation, in which, as matters now go before the public, the incompetent adventurer, with means to afford and mere *nous* to avail himself of the extensive aid of the professed painter, the carver and gilder, and the lithographer, is far more frequently successful than the erudite or the skilful architect, who fondly trusts he need not avail himself of such extraneous aid to secure the patronage of "a discerning public."

Your committee feel sure that it is quite unnecessary to adduce cases which substantially confirm the truth of this observation.

The result of the present state of the system may be seen almost daily in the lowered condition of our art, and the comparatively low estimation in which as a profession it is held, especially by those of their fellow citizens whose respectful consideration is to be desiderated,—the painter, the sculptor, the scientific, and the man of letters.

The committee have duly discussed amongst themselves the course to be adopted in the convening of a public meeting of architects in London, with a view to their adoption of some tangible code of regulations, in compliance with which they may consider all competitions ought to be conducted.

They do not trouble you now with the details of the programme of such meeting, but these details will be found to have been carefully considered. It may be thought sufficient, for the present, to advert to the general mode of procedure recommended, which is as follows:—

They propose that the Association shall, as early in the course of the present session as practicable, solicit some leading member of the profession to undertake the office of chairman, and (on the intimation of the co-operation of a few architects unconnected with the Association to support him), convene by public advertisement a meeting of architects, which may serve as a preliminary meeting for the adoption, *pro tem.*, of the code of regulations of your committee, or of any other the assembly may consider preferable to it. Such code to be thereupon printed and circulated for the consideration of all architects and architectural societies in Great Britain and Ireland, by a committee of gentlemen to be nominated at the meeting, who shall thenceforward take the matter out of the hands of the Architectural Association, select their own officers, raise subscriptions to defray the trifling expense of corresponding with the profession throughout the kingdom, and eliciting from the members of it their advice and opinion of the regulations submitted to them as beforementioned, preparatory to the convening of a *second general meeting* of architects in London, for the purpose of revising the said code of regulations, submitting it for approval to the Royal Institute of British Architects, and adopting it as binding in professional etiquette upon all architects; particularly members of the Institute, the Architectural Association, and such provincial architectural societies as may, by their accredited officers, identify themselves with it.

Your committee do not suggest that any code of regulations drawn up by architects shall supersede, but rather that it should be so appended as a pendant to, the usual instructions to architects, which, wherever they do not contravene the regulations, and so become *ipso facto* nugatory, should be held to be binding on competitors and committee alike.

As respects the code of regulations, which, in the utter non-existence of such a document, your committee venture to recommend as a nucleus for the consideration of the contemplated first public meeting of Architects, it is the result of mature deliberation on their part, and of the advice of others experienced in the question of competitions. They have drawn it up with some assurance that, although it may not be found to meet in every particular the ideas of each member of the profession, or even of the Association itself, it is essentially calculated to obviate the generally acknowledged evils of the present objectionable system, and in the main to secure the suffrages of the professional body, as the most useful form for regulating competitions that has yet been devised.

Yet, as it did not originally form part of the duties assigned them, your committee do not, by now reading it, seek to commit the Association to the document in question.

In conclusion, your committee earnestly hope the Association will not be discouraged by the seeming boldness of the step herein advocated. Great interest is now being felt on all sides on this and other questions affecting the well-being of the profession; and it is surely not too much to hope that the Architects of this country, once organised, with a well-digested code of regulations brought prominently before them, will at last bestir themselves, and effectually, to put an end to the present anomalous system. Nor let the Association be dispirited if, haply, they should succeed only in enlisting the active sympathies of the junior members of the profession in this cause: for it must be borne in mind that it is, in fact, these only that the system of competition materially affects: and if by the labours of the Association the young Architects of the kingdom, whose ideas of professional respectability are under the present system tempted to sad confusion, can be brought to enunciate a collective opinion on the right management of competitions, a great good will have been effected, and sooner or later the object we now strive for will be gained, it matters little by whose immediate agency.

Your committee are strongly of opinion it will be sufficient for the Architectural Association to simply agitate the question, and pioneer the way for its being brought to a definite issue, without being themselves over anxious to identify *their* name with any measure the profession may ultimately adopt.

Allusion has already been made to the Royal Institute of British Architects, to whom it is highly desirable, not to say necessary, to refer in this matter.

Their report, to which your committee's attention has been so long given, states that the attainment of an amelioration of the system "rests *with the profession at large*," and, therefore, there is every reason to think that, should they be consulted, they will cheerfully set their seal (so to speak) on any sound measure for amending the system which any numerous body of architects may be found to agree upon.

Should you be disposed to question whether or not the public will be likely to favourably recognise, and fall in with, any measure so sanctioned by the profession, your committee feel that they cannot close their labours better than by expressing their conviction that, in the words of the Institute's report, "in a very great majority of cases of competition the committees, or parties to whom judgment is confided, are quite ready to acknowledge themselves deficient in the means of fulfilling their duty, when once the nature of that duty is candidly and temperately explained to them; and that any suggestions to the effect above stated will be favour-

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